AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the title to read:

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR

FASTENING STEEL FRAMING WITH SELF-LOCKING NAILS

Please replace Paragraphs [0001], [0090] and [0091] with the following paragraphs rewritten in amendment format:

[0001] This application is a continuation of United States Patent Application No. 10/176,998 filed on June 21, 2002, now issued as U.S. Patent No. _____, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Nos. 60/299,931, filed June 21, 2001, 60/299,954, filed June 21, 2001, 60/299,899, filed June 21, 2001, and 60/299,903, filed June 21, 2001.

[0090] Elongated portions 328 of first and second members 324 and 326 are positioned adjacent one another and form a tip 334 that is configured to pierce framing members 12 and 14. Elongated portions 328 of first and second members 324 and 326 can be coupled together so that elongated portions 328 remain adjacent while ~~passes~~ passing through framing members 324 and 326, as will be described in more detail below. Elongated portions 328 can be coupled together in a variety of ways. For example, elongated portions 328 can be coupled together by a strap 336 and/or one or more spot welds 338. Strap 336 and spot welds 338 are configured to break and allow elongated portions 328 to separate from one another during the fastening process, as will be discussed in more detail below.

[0091] Nail 322 is configured to receive a driving force F to drive nail 322 through framing members 12 and 14. Specifically, driving force F can be applied to angular portions 332 and/or flange portions 330. As will be apparent to one skilled in the art, various types of well known devices can be utilized to apply driving force F to nail 322. For example, an air nailer or ram-type device, such as air [[nail]] nailer 90 shown in Figure 39, can be used to drive nails 322 through framing members 12 and 14. When using air nailer 90, depending upon the speed at which the device can drive nail 322, a support for bottom surface 78 of framing member 14 may be needed. Preferably, the force transmitting device used is a rapid force transmitting device that can drive nail 322 in excess of about 45 feet per second. When nail 322 is driven in excess of about 45 feet per second, bottom surface 78 will not need to be supported. However, if the force transmitting device used drives nail 322 at or below about 40 feet per second, bottom surface 74 may require support. To provide support back plate 94 [[be]] is positioned on a surface of the framing members opposite nail 322 to limit movement of and provide support for the framing members during the fastening process.